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R E P O R T S

TO THE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD

ON

PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICAL
SUBJECTS.

(NEW SERIES No. 11.)

Dr. Reginald Farrar's Report to the Local Government Board on the conditions under which persons are employed in Pea-picking; with some general observations on the employment of Casual Labour in Agricultural Districts, and an Appendix giving the Police Regulations in force during the Hop-picking season in certain districts of Bavaria.



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ARTHUR NEWSHOLME,
Medical Officer,
24th June, 1909.

IN a Report to the Local Government Board on the Lodging and Accommodation of Hop-pickers and Pickers of Fruit and Vegetables (No. 252), published in February, 1907, I dealt briefly with the subject of the lodging and accommodation of pea-pickers; but, as it seemed to be desirable to obtain further information on this subject, I was directed to extend my inquiries. Accordingly during the green-pea harvest of 1908 I made special investigation into the conditions of the pea-picking industry, and have subsequently accumulated information on the subject of fruit and vegetable picking, and other branches of agriculture in which casual or temporary labour is employed.

In the course of my inquiries I have visited the Maldon, Chelmsford, Braintree, and Ongar Rural Districts of Essex, and the Evesham, Pershore, and Upton-on-Severn Rural Districts of Worcestershire, at various dates during the green-pea harvests of 1906 and 1908; I have held conferences with the Rural District Councils of Maldon and Evesham, with a special

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committee appointed to inquire into this subject by the Ongar Rural District Council, and with the committee of the Pea-pickers' Mission in Essex. I have received valuable information and assistance from Dr. Thresh, County Medical Officer for Essex, Dr. Fosbroke, County Medical Officer for Worcestershire, and from the Medical Officers of Health and Inspectors of Nuisances for the rural districts above named and other rural districts in which temporary or casual labour is employed in agriculture. I have obtained statistical and other information from the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, from the Chief Constables of Essex and Worcestershire, from several officers and members of the Constabulary, and from Workhouse Masters of the unions of Essex and Worcestershire.

I have, moreover, conferred with many farmers in the districts affected, with parish clergymen and persons engaged in mission work, religious or social, among fruit and vegetable-pickers, with several of the salesmen in Spitalfields Market, with representatives of the Church Army and the Salvation Army, and with several private persons, among whom I may mention particularly Mrs. McClure, who having worked much among hop-pickers and having made a special study of the conditions under which hop-picking and fruit-picking are carried on, both in England and Germany, has supplied me with much valuable information. I have also made use of every opportunity that presented itself of conversing with pea-pickers and fruit-pickers.

I now tender my thanks to the above-mentioned persons, and to all others who have given me assistance and information in the course of my inquiries.

The total area on which peas were grown in Great Britain in 1907 was 166,136 acres, but by far the greater part of the peas grown are reaped, threshed, and harvested in the same way as corn crops, only a small proportion being picked "green" by hand. Until recently no exact record has been kept of the proportion of peas picked green, but the Board of Agriculture have recently made some inquiries into this matter, from which it appears that the total area on which peas are so picked does not exceed 10,000 or 12,000 acres.

The county in which the largest area is planted with peas is Lincolnshire, in which 23,836 acres were so planted in 1907, but, from inquiries made by circular in that county, I ascertained that only in two rural districts, viz., the Long Sutton and East Elloe Rural Districts, and in these only to a very slight extent, are green peas picked on such a scale as to require the assistance of imported labour to supplement local labour. The few persons so employed are of the vagrant class. Vagrant labour is also employed to some extent for the green-pea harvest in the neighbourhood of Wisbech, Isle of Ely.

Practically the only counties in which the employment of immigrant labour for the green-pea harvest constitutes a problem of serious magnitude are Essex and Worcestershire.

The area on which green peas are harvested is estimated by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to amount to 4,700 acres in Essex and 4,100 acres in Worcestershire.

In these counties the green-pea harvest is gathered to a small extent by local, but principally by immigrant, labourers.

These latter are of different classes : some are casual labourers or persons temporarily unemployed ; others are persons habitually leading a vagrant life, either Romanies or English nomads, who work from May to October through a cycle of fruit and vegetable harvests, and in the winter live by hawking, peddling, or sometimes navvying ; others are mere tramps, who seldom work, but wander from one casual ward to another, and eke out their livelihood by begging.

These classes shade into one another by imperceptible gradations. The casual labourer of the towns tends to recruit the ranks of nomad labour ; while, of the nomad labourers, though some habitually work for their livelihood, others are apt to drift into the shiftless life of the tramp. The pure-bred Romanies, habituated for many generations to the nomad life, and living in vans or in skilfully constructed and weather-proof wigwams, can well adapt themselves to the conditions of pea-picking, but this race is losing its ancient language, and with it its separate existence, and the infusion of English vagrant blood is producing a mixed race whose quality is little better than that of the English tramps.

It is difficult to determine the exact number of persons engaged in pea-picking in Essex and Worcestershire. From information supplied by the police and from other sources I estimate that in Worcestershire from 3,000 to 4,000 and in Essex from 4,000 to 5,000 are so employed.

The wages paid are—in Worcestershire about *5d.* to *8d.* per “ pot,” equal to about 40 lbs., and in Essex *1s.* to *1s. 6d.* per “ bag,” equal to about 80 lbs. The rate varies according to the size of the peas. For example, in Essex *1s. 6d.* per “ bag” may be paid at the beginning of the season, when the peas are small, but *1s.* per “ bag ” as the season advances, and the peas are larger. The pickers say that they can earn more money in the latter case than in the former.

A moderately good picker can make about *4s.* or even more in a day of 14 hours. Wages are paid nightly, each picker handing in a ticket on which the amount earned has been recorded by the weigher, but some of the more thrifty, when working for the same employer, do not collect their earnings for a week, or even longer. Picking commences with daylight and most of the pickers work very hard while in the fields. Many of them, however, continue working only until they have earned a shilling or two ; whereupon they cease, not resuming work till they have expended the money in drink. The number of vagrant pea-pickers in the district is, therefore, always largely in excess of the numbers actually at work at any given time.

The date and duration of the green-pea harvest varies according to the weather and the demand of the market. Generally, it lasts from about the middle of June to the middle of July.

Owing to the total want of organization of the pea-picking industry and the uncertainty as to the date of the commencement of the harvest large numbers of immigrants invade the districts affected about a fortnight before the peas are ready for picking.

Numbers Admitted to the Casual Ward of Essex Unions during the Midsummer and Michaelmas Quarters of 1907 and 1908.

1907.	Billericay.	Braintree.	Chelmsford.	Colchester.	Dunmow.	Epping.	Halstead.	Lexden and Winstree.	Maldon.	Ongar.	Orsett.	Rochford.	Romford.	Saffron Waldron.	Tendring.	West Ham.
6th April	83	70	141	68	49	85	20	4	60	44	48	5	96	45	2	691
12th "	109	83	121	75	35	69	15	21	60	42	46	12	113	60	3	948
20th "	141	68	123	65	35	76	21	27	70	46	51	12	107	53	4	878
27th "	142	46	131	58	35	46	4	21	54	23	44	22	101	34	7	858
4th May	156	83	115	76	67	70	15	26	60	52	31	17	82	61	6	819
11th "	107	66	101	49	34	97	23	13	70	45	41	13	117	45	11	594
18th "	99	84	141	47	58	58	25	29	89	36	55	14	98	34	2	708
25th "	131	92	124	70	77	76	12	21	36	56	56	15	115	47	8	921
1st June	164	104	147	68	66	90	17	19	125	58	68	25	156	48	13	811
8th "	219	160	181	84	110	118	39	36	139	100	91	17	138	50	7	730
15th "	237	128	480	92	86	101	29	32	178	73	101	16	222	34	8	673
22nd "	124	64	194	55	57	77	31	16	293	46	108	13	162	45	4	440
28th "	80	38	99	32	23	53	11	17	129	23	75	9	106	28	5	402
6th July	76	30	109	26	34	35	11	9	61	24	53	19	86	21	3	414
13th "	45	37	140	22	20	38	1	25	36	21	35	11	62	20	4	382
20th "	41	31	152	26	21	26	3	16	28	10	17	10	44	15	3	283
27th "	74	31	98	23	8	23	2	12	28	21	13	12	64	29	2	470
3rd August	100	45	79	25	43	29	10	14	28	66	21	12	91	37	1	482
10th "	96	47	66	29	24	32	9	18	24	23	23	23	75	21	2	646
17th "	86	36	63	31	22	38	8	24	18	37	40	3	111	26	4	726
24th "	71	30	103	44	33	34	6	20	44	17	76	9	95	17	2	824
31st "	52	31	94	26	16	36	12	3	31	15	33	3	57	16	1	563
7th September	25	36	83	19	28	25	6	11	16	7	23	11	39	17	1	392
14th "	50	23	65	34	17	24	7	8	22	15	18	9	65	22	5	373
21st "	39	27	91	34	16	22	9	20	11	11	22	12	48	17	4	341
28th "	80	35	121	53	30	48	2	17	29	32	24	14	78	27	7	592
Weekly average ...	101.0	59.0	129.3	46.3	40.2	54.8	13.4	18.4	66.9	37.4	47.4	13.0	97.2	33.4	4.6	613.9

1908.

4th April	97	69	98	45	28	49	13	17	55	45	41	1	89	27	2	454
11th "	105	104	160	43	45	69	14	14	68	58	61	—	90	26	4	1,105
18th "	112	60	112	52	58	75	12	21	70	38	55	—	107	47	9	1,246
25th "	96	81	109	60	50	71	25	24	78	40	51	3	101	38	6	1,368
2nd May	94	71	124	54	32	67	14	20	80	30	39	4	101	43	9	896
9th "	74	63	135	61	61	70	9	20	54	44	68	—	108	55	7	1,033
16th "	117	77	120	62	36	82	18	23	55	47	83	9	109	28	—	1,060
23rd "	106	67	164	46	44	85	11	45	75	33	83	13	103	42	6	769
30th "	145	113	159	66	61	92	7	19	84	46	147	17	149	39	5	727
6th June	159	118	245	55	84	127	12	22	105	76	126	17	142	53	14	559
13th "	355	187	341	84	84	86	33	35	128	115	188	22	235	22	11	773
20th "	145	52	211	47	22	52	13	28	379	46	87	22	138	20	—	527
27th "	76	51	128	19	25	42	6	17	105	25	37	18	57	18	1	388
4th July	67	36	77	27	19	46	5	6	32	17	53	14	82	6	3	360
11th "	129	39	77	38	33	76	2	8	26	82	93	10	122	32	7	447
18th "	101	44	52	33	32	85	2	20	33	70	90	15	115	20	5	644
25th "	164	49	65	27	32	43	11	21	49	59	80	15	111	33	4	478
1st August	84	44	115	13	25	44	8	18	41	39	53	7	87	25	3	384
8th "	62	36	74	17	23	57	8	11	22	32	45	19	67	32	1	801
15th "	46	55	87	44	33	38	10	21	28	21	48	13	70	20	3	805
22nd "	89	56	70	34	25	66	10	24	28	28	70	17	76	22	2	830
29th "	78	52	45	35	24	63	2	10	37	40	42	10	69	19	2	733
5th September	61	54	57	46	20	68	7	18	36	27	29	6	72	30	5	888
12th "	53	68	61	41	38	62	25	27	35	34	38	9	65	27	5	622
19th "	61	47	51	41	25	47	9	8	27	33	48	5	63	30	2	540
26th "	94	74	76	39	49	84	5	28	29	27	88	13	64	27	4	882
Weekly average ...	106.5	67.9	115.9	43.4	38.8	67.2	11.2	20.2	68.4	44.3	70.9	10.7	99.8	30.0	4.6	741.1

Numbers admitted to the Casual Ward of Worcestershire Unions during the Midsummer and Michaelmas Quarter of 1907 and 1908.

1907.	Broms-grove.	Droitwich.	Dunley.	Evesham.	Kidder-minster.	King's Norton.	Martley.	Pershore.	Shipton on Stour.	Stour-bridge.	Tenbury.	Upton on Severn.	Worcester.	Malvern Tramp Wards.
6th April ...	62	13	49	93	254	196	38	24	72	68	73	176	306	164
13th "	86	14	51	110	270	211	72	29	103	76	53	191	354	199
20th "	65	17	47	75	219	162	23	9	80	60	70	194	268	184
27th "	54	10	44	104	260	182	10	23	87	71	72	149	278	158
4th May ...	95	12	52	139	249	239	86	81	73	81	90	165	340	161
11th "	85	23	22	116	238	204	66	30	58	84	76	197	272	195
18th "	69	13	33	113	236	224	33	28	86	73	50	148	272	130
25th "	67	16	35	114	259	219	29	52	92	97	76	142	315	140
1st June ...	87	34	55	147	310	221	30	45	106	105	89	194	360	139
8th "	82	14	62	162	377	249	74	72	111	117	110	289	422	237
15th "	126	27	54	355	414	204	95	139	143	99	69	422	568	331
22nd "	117	31	33	381	366	230	52	73	101	128	60	433	629	275
29th "	54	13	32	162	257	138	29	18	45	60	29	316	324	181
6th July ...	55	17	30	111	212	130	9	25	36	53	31	152	204	86
13th "	29	14	33	88	179	133	14	14	51	51	22	123	146	66
20th "	22	8	20	41	118	87	5	10	15	33	18	44	85	36
27th "	36	13	34	46	132	114	14	10	23	43	24	75	177	60
3rd August	43	8	23	75	329	152	7	20	31	74	57	92	205	95
10th "	53	19	31	124	310	195	45	28	45	101	68	158	199	148
17th "	52	15	45	163	303	136	56	42	40	82	108	188	246	163
24th "	70	24	44	190	334	236	44	37	87	99	128	189	201	208
31st "	98	37	48	131	406	204	105	28	27	140	211	269	338	321
7th September	77	35	34	142	292	163	84	20	31	113	153	346	404	481
14th "	29	8	21	50	139	103	19	2	35	43	30	146	108	245
21st "	12	4	20	24	90	108	2	1	17	31	12	63	94	56
28th "	21	11	22	31	126	131	1	10	36	29	15	43	104	50
Weekly average ...	63.3	17.3	37.5	126.4	259.2	177.7	38.2	31.5	62.7	77.3	69.0	188.7	277.6	173.4

1908.

	82	20	23	128	54	208	19	17	70	54	47.9	210.0	217.6	225.6
4th April	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
11th "	82	12	32	130	42	185	34	33	55	83	69	139	141	146
18th "	87	15	21	124	53	226	34	21	58	85	56	177	183	152
25th "	68	9	26	131	40	273	53	23	66	108	44	185	149	141
2nd May	112	24	43	152	22	225	47	36	66	105	52	171	179	208
9th "	95	21	23	137	52	208	34	35	45	95	44	152	180	129
16th "	67	13	39	170	50	201	26	23	57	76	29	147	150	133
23rd "	91	18	11	137	35	238	22	58	61	78	22	158	165	142
30th "	97	15	32	157	47	226	17	52	79	78	40	146	164	168
6th June	159	32	29	240	52	293	37	94	81	98	36	225	261	207
13th "	147	25	37	338	61	304	41	84	86	140	41	315	277	271
20th "	119	19	44	212	71	199	18	84	57	117	23	438	252	278
27th "	54	15	22	203	43	111	8	97	58	106	12	138	148	123
4th July	46	6	16	131	19	105	20	32	41	80	8	116	133	102
11th "	52	22	27	152	36	171	27	29	37	60	18	114	182	105
18th "	94	31	39	148	53	213	44	38	54	99	25	154	222	162
25th "	61	7	27	176	28	205	28	59	50	129	24	165	180	210
1st August	83	20	42	251	33	208	62	83	66	114	31	256	229	260
8th "	90	25	43	346	18	326	62	74	72	93	51	292	231	252
15th "	135	25	64	321	45	332	130	63	61	125	94	357	292	408
22nd "	153	44	45	312	49	338	173	40	52	155	152	346	400	398
29th "	197	59	44	227	58	240	292	29	34	155	223	536	484	831
5th September	95	20	32	115	75	223	52	13	38	78	40	276	298	534
12th "	68	11	29	88	33	153	19	13	27	67	14	90	112	119
19th "	50	13	24	95	13	178	6	14	51	62	22	56	131	66
26th "	89	39	34	87	51	297	22	20	78	84	22	120	261	143
Weekly average	95.1	21.9	32.6	181.1	43.6	226.6	51.0	38.4	55.8	97.1	47.9	210.0	217.6	225.6

Hundreds of them, especially if the weather be fine, sleep by the roadside under hedges, or in ditches, or in any barns or outhouses to which they can gain admission. Hundreds, again, resort to the casual wards of the workhouses. This latter circumstance is strikingly illustrated in the tables on pages 4 to 7, compiled from returns furnished by the workhouse masters of Worcestershire and Essex, showing the numbers of vagrants admitted weekly to the casual wards of the different unions of these counties during the Midsummer and Michaelmas quarters of 1907 and 1908.

It will be noted that in almost every union of both counties there occurs during the early part of June a remarkable increase of the number of vagrants admitted, the weekly average of admissions amounting in the chief pea-growing districts, as the Braintree, Chelmsford, Maldon, Ongar, and Orsett districts of Essex, and the Evesham and Upton-on-Severn districts of Worcestershire, to more than twice the weekly average for April and May. This increase culminates in the second or third week in June, and is followed by a sudden drop, the numbers being low during July, when the pea-picking is at its height. In most of the Worcestershire Unions there is to be observed a second rise in August followed again by a fall in September during the hop-picking season.

When the harvest begins, many farmers allow the pickers to occupy barns, stables, cowsheds, pigsties or other farm buildings, or the pickers in some instances invade such buildings without the farmers' sanction. Commonly no preparation is made for their reception; they often sleep on straw on which cows or horses have recently lain and which is full of manure; the buildings which they occupy are frequently in bad repair; no provision is made for washing; and no supervision is exercised to secure proper separation of the sexes. The farmer generally allows the pickers to help themselves to clean straw, and some provide firewood, which the pickers would otherwise take for themselves out of the hedges or by breaking up wooden buildings, railings, &c. (I have known a wooden privy to be broken up for firewood); but in other respects many, if not most, farmers disavow any further responsibility for the comfort of these people.

In a few cases second-hand bell tents are provided by the employer; these are as often as not leaky and in bad repair; they are frequently overcrowded, and are generally occupied without proper regard for separation of the sexes.

Some farmers allow the pickers to help themselves to straw and hurdles out of which they construct rude wigwams. I have found more than 200 persons occupying such wigwams in a single field in Worcestershire; most of them had been camped on the same spot, working for one farmer, for about three weeks. Hundreds of pickers construct for themselves nests with pea haulms in ditches or under hedges, sometimes with a hurdle for a roof, oftener without. When they are not allowed to take refuge in farm buildings the nest of pea haulms is the commonest type of shelter found. Many merely camp out by the roadside, or in rainy weather creep into any deserted cottage or under bridges, or into any casual shelter they can find. In no instance have I found accommodation provided for pea-pickers of the type that is provided, at any rate by the better

farmers, for hop-pickers ; and, in general, the lot of the pea-picker is one of extreme discomfort.

Those who defend the utter lack of system that prevails at present, and many farmers who are members of district councils in pea-growing districts have publicly done so, allege that this open-air life is healthy. It may be true that in fine and moderately warm weather sleeping in the open involves in itself no great discomfort ; but the conditions under which most of the pickers live afford no proper facilities for washing, for changing clothes, or even for obtaining suitable food, and cannot properly be compared, even in fine weather, with those under which camping out for pleasure is usually practised. Masters of workhouses testify that pickers returning to the casual wards after pea-picking are generally in a dirty and verminous condition. In wet weather, such as often prevails during the pea harvest, the resulting conditions involve not only greatly increased discomfort, but also serious danger to health.

Only persons belonging to the lowest and most degraded ranks of casual labour are likely to tolerate such a life.

The presence of pea-pickers is regarded as an unmitigated nuisance by all residents in the pea-growing districts, except the farmers on whose farms they are actually employed. Drunkenness is habitual among them, and is so notorious that some publicans refuse to serve pea-pickers, and put up notices outside their houses "No pea-pickers served here." Lodging-house keepers often refuse to give shelter to pea-pickers on account of their drunken habits. When drunk they often insult and menace passers by, and in some districts it is regarded as unsafe for women or girls to traverse the roads at night during the pea harvest. Wilful damage, petty larceny, and even housebreaking are committed by them, and additional police are required to maintain order and prevent crime. The Chief Constable of Worcestershire, who has been good enough to obtain for me detailed information on this subject from his superintendents of police, says "there is no doubt whatever that this class forms a very serious nuisance to the residents in country districts, and gives the police a very serious amount of trouble." Many subordinate police officers both in Essex and Worcestershire have expressed themselves to me to the same effect. I have been informed by several workhouse masters that irregular unions formed by persons of this class are the cause of many of the illegitimate births that occur in workhouses.

It was shown in my reports above mentioned on the lodging and accommodation of hop-pickers and strawberry-pickers, that it is customary for farmers to provide accommodation for the temporary labourers engaged in harvesting hops and strawberries ; that to a large extent, though not universally, special huts, which are often of an admirable type, are erected for this purpose ; that these industries are to some extent organized ; that in many districts by-laws regulating the accommodation provided have been adopted ; and that there is a growing tendency on the part of farmers to acknowledge their responsibility for the welfare of these pickers during the period of their employment, and on the part of sanitary authorities to enforce the provision of proper accommodation.

In the case of pea-pickers, I have shown that frequently no accommodation whatever is provided by the farmer, that when shelter is provided in tents or in farm buildings, it is generally inadequate and unsatisfactory, and that the conditions of the industry are such as to entail severe hardship and suffering on the pickers, and grave nuisance on the districts which they invade.

Certain circumstances require to be considered which make the problem of providing accommodation more difficult in the case of the pea harvest than it is in the case of either the hop or the strawberry harvest.

1. The total duration of the pea harvest is commonly about four weeks, not much less than that of the hop harvest, but the duration of operations on any given farm is, usually, less than this. Peas, moreover, are not always grown on the same field, or even on the same farm, two years in succession; whereas, in the case of hops and strawberries, a harvest may be looked for year after year on the same farm, and a more or less permanent provision of huts or other shelters for immigrant pickers may be economically effected. A field of peas may be stripped outright in a day by a gang of 200 or 300 pickers, and the same gang may then be moved to another farm, perhaps 5 or 6 miles away. The provision, therefore, of permanent huts is not generally thought to be feasible in respect of pea-pickers.

I have met with some instances in which pea-pickers have worked year after year on one farm, and been lodged in the same building or camped in the same field for three weeks at a time; and in such cases the provision of proper accommodation should be easily effected.

2. The commencement and the duration of the pea harvest are more uncertain than the commencement and the duration of the hop and strawberry harvest. In the case of peas, the ripening of crops is more readily accelerated by a few days of sunshine, and delayed in a greater degree by bad weather than in the case of hops and strawberries, so that the exact date when a crop of peas may be ripe for gathering cannot be so accurately foreseen as in the case of hops and strawberries. The exact date, moreover, on which it may pay the purchaser to garner any given crop of peas is subject to fluctuations of the market.

Hence it results that pickers generally invade the pea-growing districts and hang about for some days before the harvest commences, in uncertainty as to when their services may be required.

Employers repudiate responsibility for the accommodation of such persons when they are not actually at work.

3. Partly arising out of the foregoing conditions there is a total want of organization of this class of labour. This want of organization is the main reason that underlies the failure to provide accommodation for pea-pickers. Whereas hop-pickers and strawberry-pickers are usually recruited in definite gangs in certain towns and brought down by rail to the place where they are required, no such provision, so far as I have been able to ascertain, is ever made in the case of pea-pickers.

The employers, knowing that abundance of cheap labour will be available from the hordes of casual labourers, vagrants, and gypsies that invade the district, are apparently under no inducement to provide lodgings for those whom they engage. Moreover, when definite gangs are engaged for the hop and strawberry harvests, the number of those requiring accommodation is approximately known; whereas, for the reasons given on page 3, the number of pea-pickers employed in any district is greatly in excess of the numbers actually at work at any given moment: the provision of lodging for all pea-pickers employed, therefore, would include such provision being made for many persons who only work at irregular intervals and for short spells.

If the above difficulties are regarded as insuperable, then the wretched plight of the pea-pickers must remain without remedy, and the districts concerned must continue to endure the evils attendant on their annual invasion. For the reasons that follow, however, it does not appear that these difficulties can properly be regarded as insuperable.

In the first place local labour might, under proper conditions, be employed to a much greater extent than at present. As things now are, vagrant labour being cheap and readily obtained, farmers will not take the necessary trouble to organize local labour. Moreover, local women generally refuse to work in the same field with persons of the vagrant class, and I have been told of instances in which the vagrants have ousted local labourers by violence and intimidation. But some farms, even now, local labour is employed, and there can be no doubt that with proper organization it could be employed to a far greater extent than at present, and the amount of imported labour necessary for the harvest very materially reduced. Gangs of local pickers could be readily conveyed over relatively wide areas in brakes or farm waggons from farm to farm.

So far as the employment of immigrant labour might still be necessary, the evils attendant on the system might be much reduced by the engagement (as in the case of hop-pickers or strawberry-pickers) of gangs of workers in the large towns and their conveyance into the district by rail. When the harvest was ripe for picking the gang could be summoned at short notice by a telegram to the ganger, and to exclude casual labour a token or tally-book might be issued to each member of the gang, accommodation being required to be provided only for so many pickers as tallies had been issued. As the acreage under cultivation for peas varies on different farms, some farmers growing many fields of peas and others only one or two, the system of engaging definite gangs of pickers would only be practicable if the employers of these imported pea-pickers would combine for this purpose. Such combination should entail no insuperable difficulties.

The engagement of gangs of workers might be facilitated by the co-operation of such organizations as the Salvation Army and the Church Army. The executive staff of the Salvation Army have special knowledge of this class of labour and the requisite machinery for carrying out such an experiment. They assisted in initiating the Blairgowrie venture, to which I shall presently allude, and in 1907 conducted with a certain measure of success a similar undertaking

in connection with the strawberry harvest in the Dartford Rural District. Colonel Iliffe, of the Salvation Army, has undertaken, with the sanction of his superiors, to make inquiries with a view to ascertaining what can usefully be done by that body towards organizing labour for the pea harvest, and the executive staff of the Church Army also have the problem under consideration.

Casual and intermittent labour might also be discouraged by withholding (as is often done in the case of hop-pickers) the greater part of wages due till the end of the harvest. The payment of wages on account would be necessary to a limited extent to enable the pickers to purchase food, but any picker demanding to be paid in full for work done before the end of the harvest would be discharged, forfeiting his tally-book and would not be re-engaged.

The withholding till the end of the harvest, or of each week, of the balance of the wage due after the deduction of the necessary advances would be a real boon to a very thriftless class.

It would be a further advantage if arrangements were made by the employer for the conveyance of food in carts to the places where the pickers are lodged. This would obviate the necessity of their resorting to populous centres for the purchase of food, and by keeping them away from the neighbourhood of public houses lessen the temptations to indulgence in intoxicating drink. In a few places this is done by private charitable enterprise, to the great benefit of the picker.

Shelters.—For reasons already given it may be conceded that it is not practicable to provide on every farm on which immigrant pea-pickers are employed temporary shelters specially constructed for their reception, but as regards the pea-growing districts of Essex and Worcestershire I have satisfied myself, by personal observation and by conversation with farmers and others acquainted with these districts, that it would be practicable to provide in central situations temporary barracks of simple construction which would suffice for harvesting operations on several farms within a radius of, say, three miles. Buildings of this class can be so cheaply erected that if a small charge were made for admission they could be made to pay for their erection, and I believe that such a charge would be willingly paid.

Scores of pea-pickers who had no shelter but the hedgerows have assured me that they would gladly pay 2*d.* for a night's lodging. In support of this statement the master of the Evesham Workhouse informs me that persons refused admission to the casual ward during the pea-picking season have, in some instances, offered to pay for a night's lodging in the workhouse, and that he has in other instances successfully demanded payment for such accommodation.

Cheap canteens might be organized in connection with such shelters.

Tents might be utilized to a greater extent than at present, but their employment requires careful supervision. Where I have seen tents in use they have been generally unsatisfactory, being second-hand bell-tents, made of condemned army tentage, often full of rents and holes, and in most cases the number of tents provided has been inadequate. Bell-tents when served out indiscriminately for men, women, and children, do not, as a rule,

allow of proper provision for the decent separation of the sexes. Tents of marquee pattern are preferable, and supervision should be exercised to ensure that men shall be separately lodged from women and children, or, if married couples and their families are allowed to be lodged in association, then separate provision should be made for single men and single women.

Farm buildings.—In many cases ordinary farm buildings can be made to suffice for the lodging of pickers, but, if so used, these should be clean and weather-tight, and should be divided in such a manner as to secure proper separation of the sexes.

It has been shown that want of organization is the main reason that underlies the failure to provide proper accommodation for pea-pickers and the consequent evils entailed on the districts which they invade, and have indicated the lines on which, by organization and co-operation on the part of the employers of this class of labour, the present difficulties might be overcome.

Most farmers with whom I have conversed deride the idea of co-operation for this purpose, and there appears to be no sufficient inducement, such as exists under the more permanent conditions of the hop-harvest, for them to organize so as to overcome the present difficulties.

In this connection it is important to note that the farmers in most cases repudiate any moral responsibility for the conditions under which the pea-pickers are employed, by transferring the onus to the shoulders of the salesman who buys the crop.

As a general rule, the farmer sells his crop of peas "standing"* and all arrangements for harvesting the crop are made by the buyer, who may or may not make some sort of bargain with the farmer for the accommodation of his pickers, but is under no compulsion to do so. In his turn, the buyer disclaims all responsibility for the lodging of "hands" who are engaged for piece-work only and discharged every evening. Being in most cases a stranger to the district the buyer is not readily amenable to the force of local public opinion.

It has been shown that the conditions of the pea-picking industry, both as regards the hardship and suffering inflicted on the pea-picker and the nuisance entailed on the general public, involve evils which call urgently for remedy. It has also been shown that these evils could by proper organization be remedied at a small cost, but that no motive, whether of self-interest, of moral responsibility, or of public opinion, has hitherto sufficed to bring about the necessary organisation.

In these circumstances it appears unlikely that material improvement is to be anticipated in the conditions under which pea-pickers work unless their employers are compelled to provide the accommodation necessary for their welfare and comfort. There is, however, no enactment by which such compulsion may be secured. It is true that a local authority may make by-laws for securing the decent lodging and accommodation of pea-pickers, but by-laws of

* A crop of peas may be sold "standing" two or three times over before it is actually harvested and the final purchase may only be effected within a few hours of the actual picking of the crop. This fact especially indicates the need of organization to secure provision of labour under satisfactory conditions.

this kind do no more than regulate the nature of such accommodation as may be provided. There is no power to deal with an employer who evades the by-laws by refusing to provide any accommodation at all.

This point is illustrated by the experience of the Ongar Rural District Council, who in 1906 adopted a code of by-laws embodying certain modifications of the Local Government Board's Model Series which were made with a view to meeting the special requirements of the pea-picking industry.

In 1907 this Council reported to the Board that "whereas before the by-laws came into force certain employers of pea-pickers provided tents or other means of shelter for their employees, on an inspection of the camps this year, when the by-laws were in force, not a tent or any means of shelter whatsoever was provided by the employers."

The Council drew attention to the anomaly exhibited in the fact of a rural council being given power to make by-laws for securing decent lodging and accommodation whilst the power to compel the provision of such lodging and accommodation is withheld.

In its legal aspect the problem appears to form part of the general problem of vagrancy. If the vagrant population could be satisfactorily dealt with, it might then be possible to fix on the employer of labour, whether farmer or salesman, the responsibility for providing proper accommodation for immigrant pea-pickers. Such legislation would supply the necessary stimulus for organisation which I have shown to be wanting at present.

To insist on proper accommodation being provided could not then be regarded as a hardship on the employer or an undue interference with the liberty of trade. The farmer who grows peas is the means of bringing into his district a very large number of persons for whom the existing accommodation of the district is insufficient. This invasion is a very serious strain on the resources of the sanitary, poor law, and police authorities, and, therefore, adds materially to the burden of the rates. It is equitable to demand that he shall use every available means to minimize this inconvenience.

The employment of casual labour for other vegetable harvests.

As has been already said, a considerable amount of the casual labour that is engaged in the pea-picking industry is absorbed during other periods of the summer in a cycle of fruit and vegetable harvests, or in operations ancillary to these harvests. Fruit growing is an industry steadily increasing in importance, and this fact, taken in conjunction with the depopulation of rural districts, has led to the replacement of local by casual labour on a considerable scale. This tendency is especially marked in Worcestershire,

but is to be observed also in Kent, Essex, Hertfordshire, and other counties.

In a previous report (No. 293) I have dealt with the accommodation provided for strawberry pickers in the Dartford Rural District. In that report it was shown that there had been in this district considerable improvement on the conditions that formerly obtained in this respect.

Work is found for many immigrant pickers by the following cycle of industries in the Teme Valley of Worcestershire, a cycle which obtains with modifications in certain other parts of the country.

Hop tying in April; hop-leaf picking in May and June; pea, strawberry, and bush-fruit picking in June and July; plum and damson picking in August and September; hop picking in September; pear picking, for perry, in September and October; apple picking, for cider, nut picking and potato gathering in October and November.

In many places immigrant labour is used for hay-making and the cereal harvests, and in some counties Irish labourers come over in considerable numbers for these operations.

The increasing importance of fruit and vegetable industries and the growing tendency to replace local by immigrant labour make it a matter of importance that proper accommodation should be provided for such immigrants.

The following example shows that excellent permanent buildings may be provided for the accommodation of temporary labourers at a relatively low cost.

The Toddington (Gloucestershire) Orchard Company have erected at Newtown 33 huts, to accommodate 99 girls engaged in fruit-picking. Their total cost, built by contract, was just over £400. The huts stand within an enclosed space, with a central kitchen. They are constructed of tarred weather-board on brick foundations, with corrugated iron roofs and wood floors. Each hut is made to hold three hammocks suspended from hooks. Their dimensions are 7 by 10 feet and 6 feet 6 inches to the eaves. They are lighted by glazed windows falling on hinged flaps; ventilation is afforded by raised roof ridging, and by a space of two inches left between the wall and the roof at the eaves. The huts are provided with eave-spouting.

The kitchen is large, and has two double chimneys and four fire-places. It is furnished with wooden tables and benches, and contains lines for drying clothes. Coal is allowed on Sundays and in wet weather, at other times firewood is provided. The ground of the enclosure and kitchen is covered with well rammed burnt clay.

There are a dozen good peat-moss privies which are emptied from outside the enclosures by means of hinged flaps at the back.

The gate which affords access to the enclosure is shut at 9 or 9.30 p.m., according to the season. Anyone entering after this time is fined 1s. at the end of the week.

Shropshire girls are employed for the strawberry picking, some of whom stay on till the middle of August for the raspberry and currant picking.

At Hadham, in Hertfordshire, I inspected 10 brick huts of a satisfactory type that had been erected for the accommodation of fruit-pickers.

The problem of replacing casual tramp labour by organized labour, and providing proper accommodation for workpeople appears to have been successfully solved since 1903 near Blairgowrie, in Scotland, where much fruit is grown for jam-making, chiefly by small holders.

With a view to dispensing with tramp labour, the small holders of Essendy, near Blairgowrie, appealed to different societies to provide respectable persons to pick their fruit, and in 1906, 400 certificated women were thus secured from different parts of the country, some sent by the Scottish Council for Women Trades, some by the Salvation Army, and others by other bodies. In addition to these, 300 boys were sent from two Industrial Schools at Glasgow. This year, 1909, the employers are advertising for 1,000 pickers. The pickers were housed in 18 brick buildings erected by co-operation by the small holders : these buildings were divided into dormitories accommodating 20 each, with iron bedsteads, chaff bed, sheets, pillows, blankets, &c. Good dining rooms and recreation rooms were provided and concerts, &c., were arranged for recreation. Catering was properly organized and food sold at moderate prices from a central kitchen.

Accounts of this venture are given in "Progress" for July, 1906, and "The Friend" for November 16th, 1906. The women employed included teachers, nurses, dressmakers, shop-girls, domestic servants, factory workers, &c.

Blairgowrie being in Scotland, I have not personally inspected this settlement, but if the experiment has been as successful as reported it is evident that with proper organization it is possible to supersede tramp labour for fruit and vegetable picking.

The successful temporary employment of boys from industrial schools suggests that boys of suitable age from similar schools might be employed for pea-picking in Essex and Worcestershire. They could easily be marched from farm to farm and it would not be difficult to arrange for their being camped under canvas.

The use of hop-pickers' or fruit-pickers' huts for other casual agricultural labourers.

In the course of my inquiries, I was repeatedly informed that there is a growing tendency for farmers to substitute casual for permanently resident labourers, and that the wages of agricultural labour are thereby depressed, for the casual labourer who can obtain shelter in a temporary hut has no rent to pay and can afford to work for less than the local resident.

As a result of this displacement of resident by casual labour in rural districts, huts erected for hop-pickers or fruit-pickers are often occupied during the greater part of the year, or even, in some instances, the whole year round.

With a view to ascertain the extent to which this practice obtains, I sent a circular letter to the medical officers of health of the principal hop and fruit growing districts requesting to be informed to what extent, if at all, and during what months casual labourers employed by farmers are accommodated in the huts erected for hop-pickers and fruit-pickers. The answers received indicate that a considerable proportion of these huts are in many districts allowed to be occupied from March to October. Some rural district councils, including those of Bromley, Dartford, Faversham, and Tonbridge, issue notices requiring temporary huts of this class to be closed between the 1st of November and the 1st of March, and, by implication, permit the huts to be occupied during the remaining eight months of the year, and it appears that many of them are so used. The above-mentioned sanitary authorities and some others endeavour to prevent the use of such huts during the winter months, but not a few cases were reported to me in which they are used the whole year round. In the East Ashford Rural District some of the hoppers' huts are allowed to be occupied during the winter months by charcoal burners.

In some cases farmers allow vagrants to occupy such huts during the winter months out of kindness, and in consideration of the fact that these persons have picked for them during the summer. Other cases occur of locked huts being broken into and occupied without the farmer's knowledge.

If the systematic use of temporary huts by casual labourers during the spring and autumn months is to be sanctioned a higher standard of construction should be insisted on than is necessary in the case of huts which are only occupied for a few weeks in the summer. Huts which may be suitable for occupation in June, July, and August are by no means necessarily suitable for occupation in March and October.

In an Appendix to this Report I have given translations, kindly furnished by Mrs. McClure, of the police regulations in force during the hop-picking season in the Mainburg, Schwabach, and Hersbruck districts of Bavaria.

Being supplied with official letters of introduction from the Foreign Office, Mrs. McClure collected information from police authorities and from farmers employing hop-pickers during a recent visit to Germany.

As in England, immigrant labour is largely employed for hop-picking in Bavaria, but the industry is regularised and more strictly controlled.

Immigrant pickers are housed in temporary buildings or farm buildings. There does not appear to be systematic inspection of the accommodation provided, but the minuteness of the police regulations implies that the pickers are under the care of the local authority. In some districts cooking is done for the pickers and food and a ration of beer issued by the employer.

REGINALD FARRAR.

APPENDIX.

TRANSLATIONS (by Mrs. McCLURE) of the POLICE REGULATIONS in force during the HOP-PICKING SEASON in the MAINBURG, SCHWABACH, and HERSBRUCK DISTRICTS of BAVARIA.

(Translation.)

DISTRICT POLICE REGULATIONS.

In force during the hop-picking in the district of Mainburg, Bavaria.

1. Every able-bodied workman, whether native or foreigner, who is in good health and is provided with proper clothing, as well as with passport, certificate of birthplace, and character from master or employer, will be eligible for employment as a picker during the approaching hop-picking season.

Wandering persons of the gipsy class, who have no settled dwelling, are not eligible as hop-pickers.

2. All employers of labour shall give immediate notice of any picker being engaged, to the acting Mayor, or in such places as are distant from the Mayor's residence to the acting District Officer, by placing before him the workman's papers of identification.

The Mayor, or the appointed officer, must keep a continuous register of the names of the workpeople engaged as pickers; the names to be entered as soon as the papers are received and the said register to be preserved even after the hop-picking season is over.

3. All hop-pickers are enjoined to give prompt compliance to the regulations put forth by their employers, and to behave themselves towards them with propriety and civility on all occasions.

During the hours of work agreed on the pickers may not leave their work without the permission of the employer or his representative.

Pickers are not allowed to frequent public houses during the hours of work.

The setting up of gipsy wagons, carts or the like moveable dwellings—with the exception of those set upon fenced or enclosed property—shall be allowed on such places only as are set apart for the purpose by the police authorities.

4. On Sundays and holidays during the hop-picking season, all public houses must be closed for the night in every parish at 9 p.m.

After closing time the doors of all houses must be locked and no one may walk about the roads or field paths except on some reasonable pretext.

5. Employers of labour or those who provide lodgings for the pickers are forbidden to take in or put up for the night at one and the same time pickers of different sexes unless they are married couples or children under 14 years of age who belong to one family.

6. In the case of workpeople being discharged, the employer must at once give notice to the police, and get from the police authorities the workpeople's papers of identification and return them to the workpeople.

7. Neglect to obey Regulations contained in § 2 (1), 3 and 6 will be punishable by a fine of 60/- (sixty shillings) or 14 days' imprisonment.

8. Special notice will be given of the date when 4 comes into force. The remaining Regulations come into force on the day of which notice will be given in the local papers.

20th July, 1908.

(Translation.)

DISTRICT POLICE REGULATIONS, SCHWABACH, BAVARIA.

Hop-picking, 1908.

§ 1. Every able-bodied workman, whether native or foreigner, who is in sound health and provided with the necessary clothing as well as with papers (*e.g.*, passport, certificate of birthplace, and character from master or employer) will be eligible for employment as a picker in the approaching hop harvest.

School children may not be employed unless accompanied by one or both parents, and must be furnished with a permit from their school authorities to the effect that their employment as pickers will not interfere with their school duties.

Wandering persons of the gipsy class are not eligible as hop-pickers.

Employers of labour and those who let lodgings are forbidden, under pain of penalty, to employ gipsies or itinerant persons of that class as hop-pickers, or to take them in, or allow them to pass the night under their roof.

§ 2. All those who are seeking work must, within 24 hours of their arrival, notify themselves to the Mayor of the district, or in such places as are distant from the Mayor's residence, to the district officer, for the purpose of showing their papers. Such persons must seek for work without loss of time, as all wandering about in the parish without work or employment is strictly forbidden.

§ 3. Every employer of labour must, within 48 hours of engaging a hop-picker, give notice of the fact to the Mayor, or in the event of remoteness from the Mayor, to the District Officer, by laying before him the man's papers.

The Mayor or the appointed officer must keep a continuous register of all the persons engaged as pickers, based on the notice of the employer and the papers received. The entries to be made on receipt of the notice and the said register to be preserved even after the hop-picking is over.

§ 4. In the town of Spalt, as also in the parishes of Grossweingarten and Mosbach, all persons engaged as hop-pickers must undergo a medical examination for the purpose of determining if they be in health; employers must be careful to see that their workpeople are examined, and must, when they notify them, at the

same time pay $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ to the local police authorities as an examination fee.

§ 5. In the parish of Wernfels (in accordance with the statutes of the Kgl. Regierung, 20th Feb., 1893, and 25th May 1903) the imported hop-pickers must be insured against illness, and to this end employers of labour must, at the time of notifying their workpeople to the parish authorities, also effect their insurance against illness and pay the appointed sum in advance for the workmen so notified for the duration of the hop-picking.

§ 6. All hop-pickers are enjoined to give prompt compliance to the regulations put forth by their employers, and to behave themselves towards them with propriety and civility on all occasions.

During the hours of work agreed on, the pickers may not leave their work without the permission of the employer or his representative. Pickers are also not allowed to frequent public houses during the hours of work. Pickers are further forbidden to camp out in the open, or to use gipsy wagons, carts or the like movable dwellings, or to be without a fixed domicile.

§ 7. On Sundays and holidays, during the hop-picking season, all public houses in the parishes of Auerau, Beerbach (here follow 12 other names) must be closed for the night at 9 p.m.

After closing time the doors of all houses must be locked and no one may walk about the roads and field paths without reasonable pretext.

§ 8. Employers and householders are forbidden to take in at the same time pickers of both sexes, or to allow them to pass the night in their houses, unless they are members of one family.

Employers may not give beer or spirits to school children as an adjunct to wages or in lieu of the same.

§ 9. In the event of the dismissal of workpeople, it is the duty of the employer to notify the same at once to the local police authorities and to fetch away the workmen's papers deposited with them and to return the same to the workmen.

§ 10. Workmen who have stopped work or who have been discharged, must, if they have lodged in any parish within the district of Schwabach, leave the parish in which they have worked within 12 hours, or if they have lodged outside the district, must leave likewise within 12 hours, and the whole district within 24 hours.

Workmen employed within the neighbouring districts of Gunzenhausen, Hilpoltstein and Weissenburg, must, on terminating their work, not remain unemployed longer than one hour within any parish of the Schwabach district, and must leave the last named district at longest within 12 hours of entering the same, if they are not lodging in it.

§ 11. Breaches of Regulation § 1, par. 3; § 2; § 3, par. 1; § 4; § 6-10, will, in accordance with Article 44 of the Police Regulations and Penalties, be punishable by a fine not exceeding £3 or 14 days' imprisonment. Breaches of Regulation § 5 by a fine not exceeding £1.

§ 12. The Regulation for closing in § 7 comes into force from Saturday, August 15th; all other Regulations come into force from the day of publication.

SCHWABACH,
26th July, 1908.

(Translation.)

BYE-LAWS AND REGULATIONS, HERSBRUCK, BAVARIA.

The following bye-laws and regulations have been drawn up for the hop-picking season.

1. The hop-pickers are to be warned to be very cautious in the use of fire and lights. Employers must exercise constant and strict supervision on this point, and not allow smoking in dangerous places.

2. It is the duty of every householder to assist the police by carefully locking up his possessions and the approaches to his house at night.

3. Residents are warned not to take in sick persons.

Pickers who are engaged must be insured against illness at the local District (Parish) Insurance Office. The weekly rate of insurance according to the bye-laws is as follows :—

2½*d.* for male workers over 16 years.

1½*d.* for male workers under 16 years.

1¾*d.* for female workers over 16 years.

*1*d.* for female workers under 16 years.

The proportion of the insurance payable by the workpeople is $\frac{2}{3}$ and by the employer $\frac{1}{3}$. The employer is responsible for the correct payment of the insurance.

Attention is further drawn to the regulation requiring that all regular workpeople engaged in hop-picking during the coming season must be insured against disablement (Invaliden Versicherung). For this purpose contribution stamps (Beitrags marken) must be obtained. Moreover, it is in the interest of the employer (to prevent subsequent make-up of stamps) to cancel the stamps at the time of affixing them.

This will be best ensured by writing the date of cancelling across the affixed stamp. Attention is further drawn to the fact that the employer is not considered to have complied fully with the Insurance Regulations unless he affix the stamps (and cancel them) on the receipt cards at the time of payment of wages. It is, therefore, not sufficient to give the workpeople the stamps, or their equivalent in money.

4. Imported labourers cannot be employed unless they are provided with adequate registration papers. These, with passport, certificate of character, &c., must be shown to the Magistrate for the purposes of registration.

In accordance with § 49 of the Regulations for Insurance against Illness, the employer must send in the names of the pickers engaged by him within three days at latest of such engagement, and also within three days of the termination of such engagement. Employers who neglect to send notice, or do not send it in within the given time, are personally liable, in the event of their workpeople falling ill before being notified, for all the expenses of the illness and medical treatment.

* The German coin is between 1*d.* and 1½*d.* English money.

Employers who neglect to give proper notice of their work-people's discharge, are liable for the payment of the insurance until notice is sent in.

5. The medical treatment of persons who have been insured is given by one of the local doctors (the patient being free to choose his doctor), the local druggist providing the medicines, and the district hospital being responsible for the nursing.

The expenses of medical attendance, &c., other than that provided by the Parochial Insurance, must be defrayed by the individual, and cannot be charged to the insurance funds.

CHR. SCHMIDT,
Magistrate.

27th August, 1908.

